

Ideas for Character Education School Activities and Programs

Developing Awareness

- # Posters displaying common definitions, the Six Pillars of CharactersSM and the words of the month/week are posted to classrooms, doorways, commons areas and by water fountains.
- # Morning announcements are related to the six pillars.
- # Quotations are shared and discussed weekly/daily.
- # Cafeteria table tents and signs are used.
- # Library displays the six pillars and establishes a companion reading list for words of the week and the six pillars. (Note: Some librarians establish a separate area in the library for materials.)
- # Pictures of student of the month, who models the pillar of the month, are posted in the building.
- # Faculty training programs are held for all staff members.
- # Assemblies (age and grade appropriate) are held to introduce or reinforce the pillars. Students and/or faculty may present skits, songs, dances, cheers, etc.
- # T-shirts are made and worn on specified days.
- # Ethical challenges are posted in the hallways or other common areas.
- # Announcements are made at school board meetings.
- # Announcements are made at sporting and awards events.
- # A school mural or paintings (with permission) of the pillars and/or a wall of pillar fame is created by students.

Reaching Out, Involving and Integrating

- # Community service activities are initiated or continued as part of citizenship and responsibility.
- # Mentoring programs are designed for incoming students and students with special needs or challenges.
- # A health or mall fair based on the Six Pillars of Character is held. Older students in elementary schools may host a fair for younger students during the school day.
- # Door decorating contest is held by homerooms.
- # Planned Random Acts of Kindness days/weeks are held for pillar of caring.
- # Grandparents, staff or older students read and discuss storybooks with moral themes to young students.
- # Six pillars essay contests are judged by community/business partners.
- # Identified school partners participate in character building activities.
- # Character articles are published in school and parent newspapers/newsletters.
- # Parent information nights are held to introduce and teach the Six Pillars of Character.
- # Parents are sent "homework" on the six pillars.
- # Host a song writing or lyric rewriting contest using the six pillars.
- # Develop a new personal coat of arms based on the six pillars.
- # Cheerleaders and drill teams make up cheers and drill activities based on six pillars. Presentations are made to service clubs.
- # Encourage businesses to post character ads on their marquees or billboards.
- # Make a large banner to hang in the school or other civic or community areas.
- # Include six pillar information or ethical decision-making information on tray liners in cafeteria and on gas/electric bill.
- # Prepare and distribute PSAs for radio, television or morning announcements.

Special Events

- # Host a "Speak No Evil" Day.
- # Display local "person of character" posters with recognition.
- # Host a community and schoolwide CHARACTER COUNTS! awards program.
- # Students present essays, quotations, art, music or drama at city/county government or civic events.
- # Host CHARACTER COUNTS!SM in sports forum discussing ethical issues that pertain to sporting events.

CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of character are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.



- # Sponsor a character ribbon contest and/or participate in Red Ribbon week (one week after CHARACTER COUNTS! week).
- # Hold a collection drive. (Collect examples of people practicing the six pillars.) Recognize students with a sticker when seen acting with character.
- # Create a service club or integrate CHARACTER COUNTS! with student council to sponsor character events.
- # Conduct a late night or overnight retreat with teens to study ethical behavior and school/community problems.
- # Host a speech contest on the pillar of the month.
- # Host a rap contest with six pillar messages.
- # Anonymously track positive behaviors during a selected period (passing in the halls/cafeteria behaviors, etc.). Post the results and/or recognize students for good behavior.
- # Host a moral courage day when students study world issues such as the Holocaust, world hunger or child abuse.
- # Students develop a school honor code.
- # Host a seminar on cheating and stealing.

Skill Building and Curriculum/Proficiency Development

- # Writing assignments evaluate the "character" of characters in novels.
- # Re-evaluate historical figures in light of the Six Pillars of Character.
- # Students and faculty maintain a personal/student portfolio or journal.
- # Presentation of an ethical challenge with classroom discussion or assignment to demonstrate appropriate ethical actions. (May include role-play, skit, writing assignment or speech)
- # Students collect personal examples of ethical conduct in challenging situations.
- # Complete curriculum modules or lessons with special emphasis on six pillars or ethical decision making.
- # Weekend, evening or special days dedicated to six pillars/ethical study.
- # Students make sample commercials or videos on six pillar interactions.
- # Student examples of good character are identified and recognized.
- # Play "Do the Right Thing" game, "Scruples" or other games in class.
- # Invite career-minded speakers to discuss ethics in the workplace.
- # Develop a resume based only on character traits.

Discipline and Responsibility

- # Develop and use a CHARACTER COUNTS! report card.
- # Post rules based on the Six Pillars of Character in each classroom.
- # Rules are taught and practiced during the first week of school or introduction of CHARACTER COUNTS! discipline program.
- # Classroom rules are discussed, then signed by students and/or parent(s).
- # Discipline Referral Forms are based on the Six Pillars of Character.
- # Students are required to make restitution for most offenses.
- # Behavior Intervention Plan includes portfolio demonstrating improved respect, responsibility etc.
- # Referral conference discusses impact of misbehavior on stakeholders. Student may be required to write a paper based on a stakeholder analysis.
- # Behavioral consequence includes a project or essay assignment demonstrating appropriate pillar.
- # A rehabilitation plan is developed that focuses on student responsibility for misbehavior and an action plan for improved behavior.
- # The rehabilitation plan includes parental notification when appropriate.
- # Examples of good models and discipline are recognized.
- # All students sign a Code of Conduct Contract.
- # Codes of conduct are developed and taught for high-risk environments (recess, cafeteria, auditorium, playground, hallways, bus, before and after school).